



Q: How long have you been involved in the diamond industry and where and how did your involvement begin?

A: As the fourth generation of an Amsterdam diamond family it was quite normal that since I was a youngster diamonds played an important role in my life. However, my real involvement in the diamond industry started after finishing Nyenrode University and my military service around 1964. After learning the basics of diamond polishing and cutting as well as the sorting of polished diamonds, I joined the family company. The main office was in Amsterdam with a separate company in Antwerp and for many years also in Paris.

Q: What is your company called and what do you enjoy most in your daily work environment?

A: The company is called Leo Blik Diamonds. I find it difficult to specify a single thing that I like most since I truly enjoy every aspect of the diamond trade.

Q: Are you married and do you have children, if so what do they do?

A: I've been married to my second wife for 32 years now. During my first marriage three daughters were born. The eldest lives with her husband and three sons in the USA. The other two live quite near us. The youngest is married and has three children. She is a professional photographer. My other daughter is a columnist.

Q: What has been your greatest achievement so far?

A: That is a question to be answered by others and not me. What I am rather proud of is that during the 30 years that I have been president of our bourse we (my colleagues and I) succeeded in putting the oldest diamond bourse in the world in the limelight so that there is a greater understanding about the function of our bourse among the Dutch population. They now know where to turn to for information and guidance.

Q: In what way has the industry changed over the years?

A: As we all know our industry developed into a global industry during the last few decades. Due to the new ways of communication available, like e-mail, our business relations expect to receive our reactions and responses to their messages immediately and vice versa. This requires many in the trade to alter the way they do business. But whether one likes it or not, this is how things work today.

Q: Are you optimistic about the future of the diamond industry and would you encourage young people to get involved?

A: Optimism is the best philosophy, so yes I'm very optimistic about the future of our trade. There is definitely a future for young people, but they have to realise that we live in a fast changing world where one has to adapt and accept new developments.

Don't stick to a business model just because you're used to it – you have to be flexible!

Q: If you had the choice, would you consider any other profession?

A: Over the years there have been a few offers to work outside the industry, but my answer has always been “no”. Diamonds are part of my life so there has never been any serious consideration for working in any other profession.

Q: Do you hold any position in any other club or association other than the WFDB?

A: For many years now I've been a member of the Dutch Diamond Committee where consumers can appeal should they have a dispute with a diamantaire or jeweller. I am also involved with the Dutch NEN/ISO and am a member of a service club.

Q: Who is your role model and who in the world would you most like to meet?

A: My late father is my role model without any doubt. He was not only a diamantaire but also a man with a deep and true interest in people.